

REEL CHICAGO

June 06, 2008

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IFO's New “Shortcuts” Film Contest for State Residents Replaces Script Competition

Now that the Illinois/Chicago Screenwriting Contest has been scrubbed after a respectable 14-year run, the Illinois Film Office has come up with a new contest for Illinois residents.

As the name implies, “Shortcuts” is a contest for short films, and Illinois may be the only state in the film game to sponsor such a competition.

The winning entry will receive a cash prize and the winning film will screen during the Chicago International Film Festival, probably under the Chicago Shorts category. Deadline for submissions is Aug. 30.

“Shortcuts” is the brainchild of IFO director Betsy Steinberg. The contest, she says, “is designed to encourage Illinois filmmakers to explore their creativity and showcase their skills.”

Steinberg, Todd Lizak and Julie Morgan in the film office will supervise the contest and a panel of industry professionals is being assembled to judge them.

Steinberg says she came up with the contest idea, “consulted some people who had administered and entered short film contests and, based on the positive feedback, decided to move forward.”

Participants may use any format – film, video, graphics and/or animation – to tell a narrative story, a documentary or free form visual expression of ideas, and submitted on a DVD.

Entries must be 15 minutes or less in running time. Entry fee is \$25. In the past with the screenwriting contest, winners’ cash prizes were provided from the collection of entry fees.

The long-running Illinois/Chicago bi-annual Screenwriting Contest was the first such state-sponsored contest. Former IFO director Suzy Kellett and CFO director Charlie Geocaris combined efforts to launch it in 1994.

The competition annually averaged around 300 entries statewide.

See “Shortcuts” contest rules and details at www.illinoisfilm.biz.